



## B. PARKS, RECREATION & TRAILS

### 1. PARKS

#### a. *Parks Setting*

The main public and private recreational amenities in Toro Canyon include Toro Canyon County Park, a regional park outside of the concentrated residential areas containing 68 acres of public picnic and play areas, a sand volleyball area, stables, and walking trails. The privately owned Santa Barbara Polo and Racquet Club located on Nidever Road and Via Real provides stables, polo grounds, tennis courts, and a pool. Other amenities include the beach adjacent to Padaro Lane and Santa Claus Lane, and several existing trails.

#### b. *Park Issues*

No neighborhood parks exist in Toro Canyon. Toro Canyon Park, in the northern Plan Area, is the only public park and the only facility with playgrounds for children.

The Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors has established in the Comprehensive Plan Recreation Element a minimum standard ratio of 4.7 acres of recreational/open space per 1,000 people in a given community area. As discussed above, formal public recreational areas within the Plan area are limited to the 68-acre Toro Canyon Park. (Since the polo fields are privately owned and are not accessible to all residents, they are excluded from consideration in community planning efforts.) The approximate population of the Plan area is 2,275 persons, based on 849 existing units and approximately 2.68 persons/unit (Santa Barbara County Housing Element, 1993). The resulting ratio is over 30 acres of recreational/open space per 1,000 people. Therefore, in terms of acreage, there is no deficiency in the amount of recreational space available. However, the recreational opportunities located in Toro Canyon Park are not immediately accessible from most residences by foot or bicycle. Therefore, there is a deficiency in accessible park land located near the most densely populated areas of the Plan area, such as Serena Park.

While a formal study has not been performed for the Toro Canyon area, analyses completed for other areas of the County such as Goleta and Orcutt indicate that the current fee structure is not sufficient to provide adequate recreational facilities. Parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities are available to project area residents, although the location and number of such facilities do not meet neighborhood recreational demand. Deficiencies include lack of developed neighborhood parks and shortages of specialized recreational facilities, such as public tennis courts and pools.

The County is usually able to secure enough capital funds to improve land for parks and open space, although it has not historically been able to secure sufficient funds for long-term maintenance of these facilities. Maintenance funding has primarily come from the General Fund. Competition for General Fund monies has resulted in the decline of funding for maintenance of public park/open space facilities, and the inability to acquire and maintain parks in the Plan area has resulted in insufficient developed neighborhood park recreational opportunities.

## **2. BEACHES**

### *a. Beaches Setting*

Although the City of Santa Barbara has many public beaches, much of the South Coast lacks formal beach access points. Of the County's 110 miles of shoreline, only twenty miles (18%) are publicly owned, although the public legally owns and is allowed access along all beaches below the mean high tide line. The coastline provides a diversity of topography and vegetation (e.g., rocky headlands and wide sandy beaches) and supports a range of recreational uses, including surfing, swimming, walking, sunbathing, and nature study. Where access is available, these beaches receive extensive use by locals and visitors, providing a significant component of local recreation.

No dedicated open public beach access exists along Toro Canyon's two miles of beach frontage. Loon Point, immediately west of Toro Canyon, provides the only open public beach access in close proximity to Toro Canyon. Loon Point provides a parking lot on the north side of Padaro Lane with a trail access to the beach and a nearby Monarch butterfly roosting area. The County also maintains two more beach access points in Summerland. The closest public beach access to the east is at Carpinteria City Beach.

Beach access in Toro Canyon has been gradually obstructed by development of coastal properties. Many properties fronting the beach in the Plan Area have seawalls and some of these seawalls project out far enough that lateral access is impaired during high tide. Informal access to the two beach areas in the Plan area is summarized below.

### *b. Beach Issues*

The California Constitution guarantees public right of access to all beach areas below the mean high tide line, and the County's Coastal Plan designates public beach access as a high priority. However, vertical coastal access along almost the entire coastal frontage in Toro Canyon (i.e., Padaro Lane to Santa Claus Lane) is severely limited and beach access is not yet formalized in Toro Canyon.

Public access for Toro Canyon's two miles of sandy beach frontage from Padaro and Santa Claus Lanes has been gradually obstructed by development of coastal properties. Substantial informal (i.e. not dedicated/protected) public access occurs by crossing the Union Pacific Railroad tracks and seawall at the western end of Santa Claus Lane. Some informal roadside parking exists in this area.

***Padaro Lane:*** The 1.5 miles of sandy beach frontage west of Santa Claus Lane beaches are obstructed at all but the lowest tides by an artificial headland consisting of several single family homes surrounded by a major seawall. Some of the homes in the Padaro Lane area were granted permits to build under the condition that access to the beach would be offered to the public via vertical easements to and/or horizontal easements along the beach. For formal access to become available at Padaro Lane, the one existing public vertical access easement within the Padaro Lane area to the beach would need to be opened and appropriate improvements may need to be provided.

Several discontinuous informal parking spaces exist on the north side of the road along Padaro Lane between Garrapata Creek and Toro Creek. Parking on the shoulder north of the road is extremely constrained east of Arroyo Paredon due to an open drainage channel and landscaping. Traveling westward, the shoulder widens and many parallel and perpendicular parking space areas approximately fifteen feet wide exist. Approximately 15-20 spaces are developed between the residences of 3200 to 3300 Padaro Lane.

***Santa Claus Lane:*** This area is extensively used by the public, although no official beach access easement exists. Public access occurs by crossing the Union Pacific Railroad tracks and climbing over large seawall rocks at the western end of Santa Claus Lane. No crossing guards or signals exist to caution beach-goers of approaching trains, and traversing the seawall can be difficult. Limited informal roadside parking exists in this area.

The Toro Canyon Plan may be used in conjunction with the County's ongoing coastal access implementation program to secure additional public beach access.

### 3. TRAILS

#### *a. Trails Setting*

In the South Coast, seven public trails (Romero, Rattlesnake, Cold Springs, San Ysidro, Jesusita, Tunnel and Gaviota Trails) provide hikers, bicyclists and equestrians access to the Los Padres National Forest and remote scenic areas not served by roads. The 1980-1981 Comprehensive Plan and Coastal Plan included a Recreation Element and accompanying Parks, Recreation and Trails maps (PRT-2) for the Carpinteria/Summerland areas. The map includes the Toro Canyon Planning Area within its boundaries and establishes a planning tool for a proposed network of trails identifying existing trail easements and proposed trail corridors for future exaction or acquisition. Table 6 provides a brief description of these trails. Figure 10 represents an update of PRT-2 for the Planning Area with minor revisions. The 1980-1981 map established an extensive network of proposed off-road and on-road trails. The Toro Canyon Plan updates and revises the map to reflect existing easements and shifts some proposed trails to follow property boundaries. The Plan also revises the routing of trails 2, 6, and 11, adds an on-road trail along Nidever Road and shows proposed staging areas (Figure 10). The eighteen existing and proposed off-road trails total over seven miles in length, and the six existing and proposed on-road trails are over three miles in length. The Polo Club Connector/Perkins Trail and Toro Canyon Park Trail are the most accessible and clearly marked existing trails in Toro Canyon.

The proposed Plan incorporates input from representatives of the Montecito Trails Foundation and the County Riding and Hiking Trails Advisory Committee (CRAHTAC), First District. Many of the proposed trails have been sited to connect with existing trails outside of the Toro Canyon Plan area.

# Toro Canyon Plan

## AGENDA ITEM 2 ATTACHMENT 3

**Table 6: On-Road Trails<sup>1</sup>**

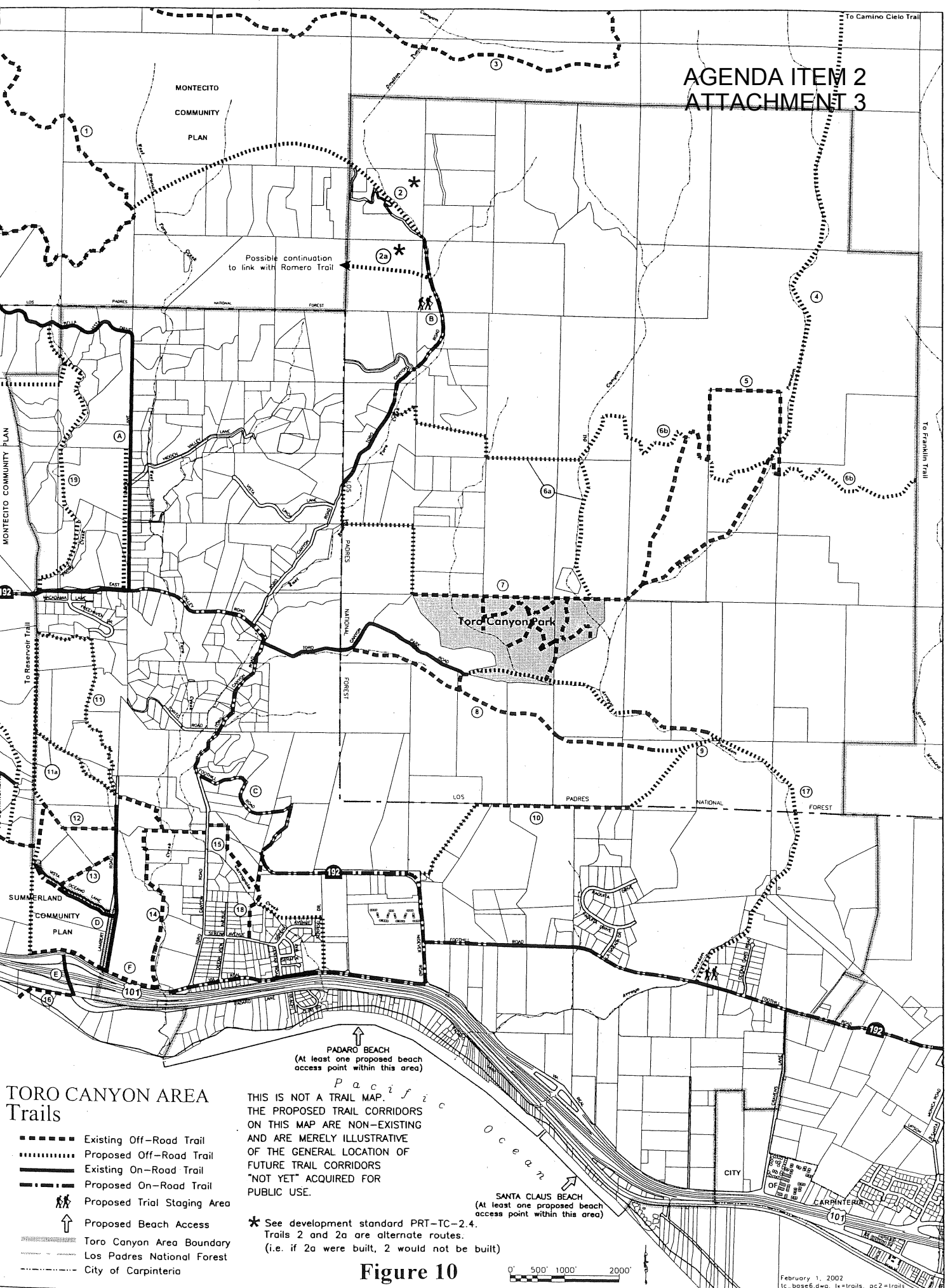
Key	Trail Name. Description
A	<b>Ladera Lane.</b> Wide, straight, steep road has ample room for pedestrians on unmarked road shoulders.
B	<b>Toro Canyon Road.</b> Due to creeks, steep slopes adjacent to the road and encroaching vegetation, constructing a road shoulder trail here is unlikely. An easement is held for the portion of Toro Canyon Road just north of where Toro Canyon Road and Vista Linda Road meet. High acquisition priority. Low-intensity parking area proposed to serve proposed trail connecting to Romero Canyon Trail and proposed trail connecting to Toro Canyon Park.
C	<b>Foothill Road.</b> A designated Class III bike trail, portions of this road east of Serena Park are moderately wide, allowing for some recreational use on the marked shoulders. The portion which winds through the canyon is much narrower. Low acquisition priority. Staging area proposed to serve proposed Arroyo Paredon Creek Trail (Peck Trail).
D	<b>Lambert Road.</b> Moderately wide road allows for some recreational use on the unmarked shoulders.
E	<b>Padaro Bridge Shoulder Trail.</b> West of Toro Canyon, connects across creek and under freeway.
F	<b>Via Real.</b> Extends from west of Toro Canyon at Greenwell Ave. to Nidever Road. Class II bikeway recently created along Via Real through the Toro Canyon Planning Area. High acquisition priority.

**Table 6: Off-Road Trails<sup>1</sup>**

Key	Trail Name. Description
1	<b>Romero Canyon Trail. North of Toro Canyon.</b> The eastern-most and western-most portions of this trail are used for mountain biking as well as hiking. Provides connection to Camino Cielo trail. Officially open to the public, passable.
2	<b>Proposed Connection, Romero Canyon Trail from Toro Canyon Rd. (Toro Canyon Saddle Trail).</b> High acquisition priority.
2a	<b>Proposed Alternative Connection to Romero Canyon Trail . Steep terrain, but distant from avocado orchards.</b>
3	<b>Camino Cielo.</b> Dirt road path north of Toro Cyn., part of the Los Padres National Forest. Open to the public, passable.
4	<b>Proposed Camino Cielo Connection from trail northeast of Toro Canyon Park.</b> Trail would be along Arroyo Paredon Creek corridor, sited with least impact to biological resources as feasible. Medium acquisition priority.
5	<b>Trail northeast of Toro Canyon Park.</b> Legal easements form a loop here, but trail not built. High construction priority.
6a	<b>Proposed Connection to Toro Canyon Road/Toro Canyon Park.</b> Would be continuous with proposed Edison Catway trail and existing loop easement northeast of Toro Canyon Trail. High acquisition priority.
6b	<b>Edison Catway.</b> Dirt road which facilitates utility line maintenance. Proposed trail to connect with Franklin Trail located in Rancho Monte Alegre. High acquisition priority.
7	<b>Toro Canyon Park Trail.</b> Moderately steep loop within Toro Canyon Park. The crest of the trail features a viewing area with a gazebo and bench. This County property is open to the public and passable. A large parking area is located within the park. <b>Alice deCraft Trail.</b> North of Toro Canyon Park. This is a legal county easement, but is closed to the public and impassable. This trail easement would connect with proposed Trail 4 to connect to Camino Cielo.
8	<b>Canyon Trail/Ridge Trail (Talcott Trail).</b> The Canyon trail leads from the road to a viewing area. The Ridge Trail begins at the crest of Toro Canyon Park Rd. This trail is a legal county easement officially open to the public.
9	<b>Pump Station Trail.</b> Some easements are held along this proposed trail.
10	<b>Unnamed Rocky Trail.</b> This is a legal county easement. The property is very rocky and steep. Low priority.
11A	<b>Proposed Lambert Trail.</b> This trail would provide another route northwest to the Reservoir Trail west of Toro Canyon from the Polo Club Connector/Perkins Trail, following a Toro Creek tributary. Low acquisition priority.
11	<b>Proposed Lambert Trail Alternative Route</b>
12	<b>Reservoir Trail Connection.</b> West of Toro Canyon. A legal county easement, open to the public.
13	<b>Fantasy Farms Loop.</b> Legal county easement open to the public, passable.
14	<b>Toro Canyon Creek Connector/Meeker Trail.</b> Legal county easement, closed to public due to encroachment. High priority to reopen.
15	<b>Polo Club Connector/Perkins Trail.</b> Generally narrow, flat, straight, equestrian trail runs east-west between private developed property fences. Extends from Lambert Rd. to Foothill Rd. Continues westward to Summerland.
16	<b>Loon Point Beach Access Trail.</b> West of Toro Cyn. This trail provides the closest formal beach access to Toro Cyn and has a parking lot with an off-road trail to the beach. Legal county easement or property open to the public, passable.
17	<b>Arroyo Paredon Creek (Peck Trail).</b> Would connect to Toro Canyon Park from Foothill Rd. High acquisition priority.
18	<b>Ed Clark Trail.</b> Legal county trail easement or property, closed to the public. High priority to open the trail.
19	<b>Picay Creek Trail.</b> Proposed trail connecting existing on-road E. Valley Rd. trail and Bella Vista Dr. trails to be located generally within an existing conservation easement. Segment of this trail would connect to Romero Cyn. Rd. High Acquisition Priority

<sup>1</sup> Note: The map referred to by these tables is a broad planning map. The *proposed* trail corridors on the maps are merely illustrative of the general location of future trail corridor locations.

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For example, connections to the Romero Canyon Trail, Camino Cielo in the Los Padres National Forest, and the Franklin Trail are proposed. Two new staging areas, where public parking would be provided to increase trail accessibility, are proposed in conjunction with the trails. The staging areas, as shown on Figure 10, would be located in the area of Foothill Road near Arroyo Paredon Creek and near the debris basin on Toro Canyon Road.

According to the Parks and Recreation policies of the Land Use Element, opportunities for hiking and equestrian trails should be preserved, improved, and expanded wherever compatible with land uses. Toro Canyon, because of its special aesthetic qualities, topography, opportunities for wildlife study, and views of the Santa Ynez Mountains and ocean, is an especially ideal place for trails. Careful trail siting is important to minimize negative impacts to the natural environment and existing land uses and developments. Appendix E addresses land use compatibility; biological, agricultural, and archaeological concerns; access control; and trail maintenance/construction.

*b. Trail Issues*

- **Staging Areas.** Many proposed trails and existing legal county easements do not have parking available at trail heads.
- **Encroachments.** Legal county trail easements sometimes become impassable due to private property owner fencing or vegetation overgrowth.
- **Fragmentation.** Many trail easements held by the County are not continuous with existing trails and the connectivity of existing trails is extremely limited in Toro Canyon.
- **Agricultural Land Use Conflicts.** Siting trails near agricultural lands can be problematic due to potential pesticide use harmful to trail users, and potential pilferage and damage to agriculture by trail users.
- **Aesthetics.** Development next to trails can obstruct public views from trails. Construction material, such as reflective greenhouse roofs in the southern area of Toro Canyon, can degrade public views.

#### **4. PARKS, RECREATION, AND TRAILS GOAL, POLICIES, ACTIONS, AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS**

**GOAL PRT-TC: Public Recreational Opportunities For Residents And Visitors, Including Improved Beach Access, Expanded Trail Network And Parks.**

**Policy PRT-TC-1:**        **The County shall strive to provide new park facilities, increased beach access and new trails.**

**Policy PRT-TC-2:**        **(COASTAL) Public accessways and trails shall be provided in accordance with the following standards:**

- a. Offers to dedicate public access shall be accepted for the express purpose of opening, operating, and maintaining the**

accessway for public use. Unless there are unusual circumstances, the accessway should be opened within 5 years of acceptance. If the accessway is not opened within this period, and if another public agency or qualified private association acceptable to the County expressly requests management of the easement in order to open it to the public, the easement holder may transfer the easement to that entity. A Coastal Development Permit that includes an offer to dedicate public access as a term or condition shall require the recorded offer to dedicate to include the requirement that the easement holder shall transfer the easement to another public agency or private association acceptable to the County that requests such transfer, if the easement holder has not opened the accessway to the public within 5 years of accepting the offer.

b. Where there is an existing public access Offer-to-Dedicate (OTD), easement, or deed restriction for lateral, vertical or trail access or related support facilities, necessary access improvements shall be permitted to be constructed, opened and operated for its intended public use. Facilities to complement public access to and along the shoreline should be provided where feasible and appropriate. This may include signage, bicycle racks, parking, trash receptacles, sewer-connected sanitation facilities, picnic tables, or other such improvements. No facilities or amenities, including, but not limited to, those referenced above, shall be required as a prerequisite to the approval of any lateral or vertical accessways OTDs or as a precondition to the approval, construction or opening of said accessways.

c. For all offers to dedicate an easement that are required as a condition of Coastal Development Permit approved by the County, the County has the authority to approve a private association that seeks to manage the easement. Any government agency may accept an offer to dedicate an easement if the agency is willing to operate and maintain the easement. The County may approve any private association acceptable to the County that submits a management plan that indicates that the association will open, operate, maintain and manage the easement in accordance with terms of the recorded offer to dedicate the easement.

### Parks

**Action PRT-TC-2.1:** The County shall conduct a fee study, to be completed by 6/30/2003, to determine if current fees are adequate to provide and maintain parks and other public recreational facilities.

**Action PRT-TC-2.2:** The County shall pursue siting a neighborhood park within the central area of residential development near Toro Canyon Road and Highway 101.

**Beach Access**

**Action PRT-TC-2.3:** In a manner consistent with Coastal Land Use Plan Policy 7-8 and Coastal Act Sec.s 30210 through 30214, the County shall accept and open the vertical easements for public beach access offered in connection with developments on Padaro Lane. Planning for the scope, design and location of improvements shall be done in consultation with local residents and other affected parties. The County shall consider appropriate improvements in any project to open beach access, such as signage, bicycle racks, parking, trash receptacles, sewer-connected sanitation facilities, or other appropriate features for the beach access, described in Policy PRT-TC-2. The opening of any beach access shall be undertaken in a manner consistent with Coastal Act Sec.s 30210 through 30214. The siting of the beach access shall minimize removal of native trees and eucalyptus trees that are part of a monarch butterfly aggregation site.

**Action PRT-TC-2.4:** The County shall pursue public access to the beach from Santa Claus Lane. Public beach access shall be formalized as soon as feasible by securing and opening a vertical accessway between Santa Claus Lane and the beach, by clarifying the status of lateral beach access rights, or by securing any easements that may be necessary and appropriate. In addition, where feasible, the County shall ensure the provision of adequate coastal access parking including signage designating the parking for this purpose, appropriate safety features, and/or the installation of appropriate support facilities as described in Policy PRT-TC-2 such as any necessary signage, bicycle racks, parking, trash receptacles, landscape screening, restrooms and other appropriate features. A railroad crossing with armatures, lights, and bells and a stairway and/or access ramp over or around the seawall should also be considered. Access for jet ski and other motorized recreational activity shall be prohibited from any coastal access established at the Santa Claus Lane beach area, and signage indicating this prohibition shall be posted at the parking area(s) developed in support of this recreational access point. Planning for the scope, design and location of improvements shall be done in consultation with local residents and other affected parties. The County shall aggressively pursue funding for the design and implementation of beach access at Santa Claus Lane at the earliest feasible date. Permits for new development shall include conditions that incorporate feasible measures that provide or protect access and, where there is substantial evidence that historic public access exists, the project shall be conditioned to continue providing for such access.



#### Trails

- Action PRT-TC-2.5:** The County should investigate all obstructions to dedicated public trails and property and take appropriate action to remove any such obstructions.
- DevStd PRT-TC-2.6:** Consistent with the Agricultural Element, all opportunities for public trails within the general corridors identified on the Parks, Recreation and Trails (PRT) map shall be protected, preserved and provided for during review and upon approval of development and/or permits requiring discretionary approval. County Public Works shall consult with the County Park Department prior to issuing any encroachment permits for on-road development such as driveways along road shoulders with current or proposed trails.
- Action PRT-TC-2.7:** The County shall actively pursue acquisition of interconnecting useable public trails within designated trail corridors through negotiation with property owners for purchase, through exchange for surplus County property as available, or through acceptance of gifts and other voluntary dedications of easements.
- Action PRT-TC-2.8:** If either of the proposed alternative connections to the Romero Trail from Toro Canyon Road (2 or 2a on Figure 10) and/or the proposed connection between Toro Canyon Park and Toro Canyon Road (6a on Figure 10) are constructed, the County should consider the feasibility of siting low-intensity roadside parking on the western portion of parcel 155-020-004 (Figure 10). Also, appropriate “no parking” signs shall be located along Toro Canyon Road consistent with applicable County Road Division standards, and motor vehicle barriers shall be installed at trailheads per County Park Department standards. The staging area would feature a minimal amount of grading and clearing so as not to disturb existing trees.
- Action PRT-TC-2.9:** Trailhead parking shall be sited and designed to minimize disruption to existing neighborhoods.
- Action PRT-TC-2.10:** The County shall support the efforts of volunteer trail organizations and encourage their efforts to clear trails. County support may include, but not be limited to: coordinating volunteer efforts, designating a liaison between volunteer groups and the County Park Department, providing information on grant opportunities, and facilitating communication between trail organizations.
- Policy PRT-TC-3:** The County shall ensure that trails provide users with a recreational experience appropriate to the quiet, rural nature of the area.

- DevStd PRT-TC-3.1:** Development adjacent to trail easements shall include setbacks and, where appropriate, landscaping to minimize conflicts between use of private property and public trail use. For off-road trails outside of Urban and Rural Neighborhood areas, new structures shall be sited at least 50 feet from the edge of trail easements unless this would preclude reasonable use of property.
- DevStd PRT-TC-3.2:** On-road trail development design shall maximize road shoulder width to separate trail users from vehicular traffic.
- Action PRT-TC-3.3:** The County should explore the feasibility of routing trail 2 from Toro Canyon Road to connect with the Romero Trail south of the Edison Catway (see trail route 2a on Figure 10). Property owners, the Park Department and Planning & Development should work together to determine trail siting feasibility.